

Message Text

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SUBJ: USG PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON MEXICAN NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORT

1. AS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT (GOM) IS PREPARING ITS INTENSIFIED POPPY ERADICATION EFFORT, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SEPTEMBER ONE, AND AS THIS MISSION IS GEARING UP FOR ITS PARTICIPATION, I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE REMIND OURSELVES OF THE GOM'S SENSITIVITY ABOUT USG-ORIGINATED PRESS STATEMENT, AND WHAT AT TIMES SEEMS A USG OBSESSION WITH THE NUMBERS GAME.

2. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND HIS STAFF, ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT USG PRESS STATEMENTS AND LETTERS TO CONGRESSMEN WHICH IMPLY THAT THE USG IS DIRECTING OR MONITORING THE ERADICATION OF POPPIES IN MEXICO. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE PERCEIVE OUR ROLE AS ONE OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO AN OTHERWISE ENTIRELY MEXICAN EFFORT. THIS I WOULD HOPE THAT ALL PRESS RELEASES, COMMUNICATIONS WITH CONGRESS, AND OTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS WOULD REFRAIN FROM USING THE RATHER VAGUE "WE ARE DOING SUCH AND SO" AND INSTEAD CLEARLY STATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO IS THE ACTION ENTITY.

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3. AS TO THE NUMBERS WHICH THIS MISSION WILL REPORT

ON A REGULAR BASIS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL RECIPIENTS REALIZE WHAT THEY MEAN. THE NUMBER OF POPPY CROPS DESTROYED AND THE NUMBER OF FLIGHT HOURS LOGGED ARE, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IMMATERIAL. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT HEROIN OF MEXICAN ORIGIN BECOME DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN IN THE UNITED STATES. IN THE MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES JARGON THAT WAS SO MUCH IN VOGUE SEVERAL YEARS AGO, OUR OBJECTIVE IS REDUCED AVAILABILITY OF MEXICAN HEROIN WHILE THE DESTRUCTION OF POPPY CROPS IS MERELY AN ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE FINAL OBJECTIVE.

4. IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM WE HAVE SUGGESTED MINOR MODIFICATION IN THE REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR THIS YEAR'S POPPY ERADICATION PROGRAM. THE FIGURES TO BE REPORTED WILL BE THOSE GIVEN TO US BY THE GOM. MISSION PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD, PARTICULARLY THE DEA AGENTS ASSIGNED HERE ON TDY, ARE ALSO BEING TASKED TO REPORT ERADICATION AS SEEM FROM THEIR VANTAGE POINTS. IF AND WHEN SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES EXIST BETWEEN THE DATA REPORTED BY THE GOM AND OUR OWN SOURCES IT WILL BE REPORTED. HOWEVER, I HOPE WE CAN AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO BECOME ALARMED WHEN THE TWO SETS OF DATA ARE IN MINOR VARIANCE.

5. THIS MISSION AND THE GOM ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE CROPS THAT ESCAPE GOM CONTROL ARE THE IMPORTANT ONES. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE GOM IS SERIOUS IN ITS DESIRE TO DESTROY ALL RPT ALL POPPIES THAT ARE LOCATED. BUT WE SHOULD REALIZE THAT THIS IS A TALL ORDER, COSTING THE GOM DEARLY IN BOTH MONEY AND LIVES. IN VIEW OF THIS GOM COMMITMENT, I WOULD HATE TO SEE UNWARRANTED USG SNIPING AT THE GOM'S DAY-TO-DAY EFFORT, JUST AS I WOULD DATE TO SEE THE USG CLAIMING CREDIT FOR WHATEVER SUCCESS THE GOM PRODUCES.

6. IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT AN ILL-ADVISED PUBLIC STATEMENT DOES NOT UPSET THE GOM AND LEAD TO LESSENERED RATHER THAN INCREASED COOPERATION ON NARCOTICS, I AM TEMPTED TO ASK THAT THIS MISSION BE PERMITTED TO RELIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIEW ALL SUCH STATEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE RELEASED OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. HOWEVER, I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS WOULD BE A BURDEN BOTH FOR WASHINGTON AND FOR THE MISSION, AND SUGGEST, AS AN ALTERNATIVE, THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES ESTABLISH A REVIEW PROCEDURE TO ACCOMPLISH THE SAME PURPOSE.
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